

Division 24: Education, \$5 379 782 000 —

Mr D.A.E. Scaife, Chair.

Mr T.J. Healy, Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education and Training.

Ms L. Rodgers, Director General.

Mr J. Peckitt, Deputy Director General, Education Business Services.

Mr R. Thomson, Executive Director, Infrastructure.

Ms M. Sands, Deputy Director General, Schools.

Mr M. Clery, Executive Director, Statewide Services.

Ms R. Lee, Executive Director, Strategy and Policy.

Mr R. Miles, Director, Teacher Registration.

Mr C. Ward, Executive Director, Professional Standards and Conduct.

Mr J. Bell, Deputy Director General, Student Achievement.

Ms R. Bope, Director, Public School Accountability.

Mr A. Blagaich, Executive Director, School Curriculum and Standards Authority.

The CHAIR: I thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Community Services for stepping into the role.

The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. The chair will allow as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point. Consideration is restricted to items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must relate to a page number, item or amount related to the current division, and members should preface their questions with these details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by close of business Friday, 3 June 2022. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system.

Ms J.J. SHAW: I will hand over to the parliamentary secretary for education to do the introductions.

The CHAIR: All right, the parliamentary secretary for education.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: The member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I have a point of order. Perhaps you can guide me, chair. We have now lost 10 minutes. The parliamentary secretary gets paid a considerable amount of money to turn up to these estimates hearings. We have a shorter time now—by 10 minutes. Can we extend the time? It is pretty much unacceptable that the opposition has only a small window to scrutinise the government. The parliamentary secretary has a team —

Mr T.J. HEALY: My apologies. I am ready to start when the member is.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: — of advisers here that is larger than the number of opposition members in the chamber. Can we find the 10 minutes that we have lost? What we will find is that the parliamentary secretary will tell us to put the questions that we ask on notice rather than give us the answers. It is just outrageous and unacceptable at this time. The arrogance shown by the parliamentary secretary and this government is limiting the opposition's time to question and hold the government to account on behalf of Western Australian taxpayers to ensure that our education system is adequate and strong. We have now lost 10 minutes of our time to question the parliamentary secretary.

[9.10 am]

Mr T.J. HEALY: Chair, we are ready when you are.

The CHAIR: Thank you, member for North West Central. Even though that is not a point of order, I have let you make your point. Yes, it is my expectation as chair that all members of the committee and ministers and parliamentary secretaries be here on time for sessions. To answer your question, though, no, it is not possible, because the timetable is determined in advance by the house, and it is not possible for the committee to overrule the decision of the house when it comes to the timetable. Members, we are dealing with division 24.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I hope the parliamentary secretary answers the questions, then.

The CHAIR: Are there any questions?

Mr T.J. HEALY: If the member asks the questions, I am happy to.

The CHAIR: Are there any questions, not commentary? The member for Roe.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I would also like to echo the disappointment of the member for North West Central. I assume that that will rule out any Dorothy Dixers from the government to maximise our time.

The CHAIR: We are wasting time at this very moment. Member for Roe, you know my view, as chair, of Dorothy Dixers in estimates, so you should be in safe hands.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to page 365 of budget paper No 2, volume 1. The seventh paragraph at the top of the page, under “Staffing and Schools”, states that attracting teachers with the right skills to the right areas at the right time remains a priority and that the department has implemented a lot of strategies to support and recruit particular staff. In last year’s budget, there was an \$11 million increase for school psychologists. Currently, there are 10 positions vacant for school psychologists, apart from pool appointments. What strategies has the department implemented to attract school psychologists and the like?

Mr T.J. HEALY: In terms of paragraph 7, I am happy to discuss our attraction of staff, but I think the member’s question about psychologists would apply to a different line item. I will clarify again. The member asked a question about supporting and recruiting skills to the right area. I have some notes here, so, for the sake of it, I will give it to the member, because I apologise for being late. I can confirm that attracting teachers and all staff with the right skills to the right areas at the right time is certainly a priority. I think the member has said in his speeches that despite the pressures last year, we did quite successfully at the start of this year. That is certainly commendable of the team here with me and all the staff and principals across all our schools. Regarding the query about school psychologists, as at 28 April 2022, an average of 402.6 school psychologist FTEs were employed across the public school system, an increase from 376.7 in 2021. The department is continuing to work in partnership with local universities on graduate supply in the context of the government’s election commitment. As the member will be aware, our election commitment was quite broad last year, and it is being implemented quite well. There is an increase in demand for psychologists.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: In relation to the school psychologists, as I said, currently there are 10 positions vacant, apart from pool appointments. Does the parliamentary secretary feel that these will be filled any time soon or is there a projection of when they will be completely filled?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Can the member repeat that question? Is he saying that we do not have enough psychologists?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: At the moment, there are 10 positions vacant. Is there a projection of when they will be filled?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Thank you for the question. We are on track to fill them.

Ms L. METTAM: How many positions need to be filled?

Mr T.J. HEALY: In the question from the member for Roe, he said that there were 10 positions vacant.

Ms L. METTAM: Yes.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Does the member have a further question to that part?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: No; we want you to answer it. Do not come in here late and start playing games. Answer the question!

Mr T.J. HEALY: Thank you, member for North West Central. Additional FTEs will be added in additional years. I can confirm that there will be an additional 42 FTEs in 2022, rising to 100 FTEs by 2025. There will be vacancies when those are filled, and the department has employed 72 new school psychologists to date, with 30 in country regions.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Given recent attacks such as that at Gilmore College, does the parliamentary secretary see that there is a shortage of psychologists and the support that is required for students in those high-risk environments?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I think the member is referring to another section in his question. Health and wellbeing is a priority and that is why we committed to school psychologists in the first place.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: On the back of the concern for students and teachers, last week Carnarvon Community College was placed in lockdown after a primary-age schoolgirl climbed up on the roof armed with a sharp kitchen utensil and had to be coaxed down by police. What does the parliamentary secretary say about the escalating instances that are occurring right throughout our schools in which an increasing number of students are armed and are putting teachers and other students in danger? What is the department doing to assist those students with their mental

wellbeing and also to attract and retain teachers when there are record amounts of payouts to teachers because their mental wellbeing is being affected by the environment they are in?

Mr T.J. HEALY: When the member asks, “What do we say about violence in schools?”, I am sure he will commend Minister Ellery and the director general for having a very firm line. I am sure he has seen the “Let’s Take a Stand Together” plan about violence in schools. There is a very united position across schools, implemented by the director general and the minister, that we say no to violence in schools. We have a very impressive line, and it is backed up with support. We say no to violence in schools.

I will further add to what the member said by saying that the principal at that school acted very, very swiftly in that scenario. A number of opportunities and options are provided. There are now clearer directions about consequences when there are incidents in schools and about the violence in schools policy. There is also the alternative learning settings and other opportunities and options for young people. We commend all teachers. There was a reference to Gilmore College and other unique circumstances in schools. We have a strong position that is supported by schools and the department.

[9.20 am]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is all very well having a paper and singing *Kumbaya, my Lord*, but the reality is something different. The reality is that violence in schools is increasing. The member for Roe has raised an instance. I have raised an instance. If we talk to teachers around the state, we find that violence is increasing, and that is backed up by the record amount of payouts that the Department of Education has made to teachers. The government can have every line in the sand, but we are finding that violence in schools is increasing, which is affecting the ability to retain students in schools because families want to take those students out.

The CHAIR: I will just take a point of order from the member for Bicton.

Mrs L.M. O’MALLEY: I am just curious about which line item this refers to? I am just drawing the member’s attention to the fact that in estimates, it is a page and a line item.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I can give the member a line item if she wants.

Mrs L.M. O’MALLEY: Not a speech.

The CHAIR: Thank you. There is no point of order, member for Bicton. But it would help if the member for North West Central could direct us to a line item.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I am continuing with a further question.

The CHAIR: I accept that there is going to be a relevant one, but if you could preface your questions with that, that will assist the proceedings.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: No; I have not finished yet. It is important. You have said that there is a line in the sand and there is a paper —

Mr T.J. HEALY: Can you ask your question?

The CHAIR: Just take a breather, both of you. The member for North West Central has the call. Parliamentary secretary, I will let him finish the question and then you will have an opportunity to respond. The member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Thank you, chair. The rhetoric that is coming out of the parliamentary secretary’s mouth and from the Minister for Education is clearly not keeping pace with reality. The reality is that crime is escalating, we are losing teachers and record payments are being made due to the way the education system is being run. Surely it is cause for alarm when a primary school-age student climbs onto a roof with a sharp implement and that shuts down a school. I would like to know how many instances of violence have occurred in places like Carnarvon Community College and other schools around Western Australia, because the evidence seems to be in complete contradiction to the line in the sand and the piece of paper that the government has while it sings *Kumbaya*. Actions speak louder than words.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Thank you very much, chair, too. Like I said, I am happy to answer that question. After this point, the member for North West Central will have to look up a line item. Every parent rightly expects that when their child is at school, they will be safe and nurtured and supported to learn. Similarly, staff should also feel safe in their workplace. Again, I have mentioned the 10-point action plan that we have to address violence in public schools. The “Let’s Take a Stand Together” plan is very much supported by the community, schools and teachers. We are implementing a whole-school approach to create a school environment in which students are actively engaged in the curriculum, feel cared for by staff and develop a sense of belonging to the school. There is further access. They are providing classroom management strategies and there is the WA positive behaviour support programs

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 25 May 2022]

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Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Peter Rundle; Ms Libby Mettam; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Ms Mia Davies

and de-escalation strategies. There is access to resources and supports to assist staff to make necessary teaching and learning adjustments to ensure that students can access the curriculum. They are implementing evidence-based social and emotional learning programs. I can confirm that in 2021, 6 397 staff undertook classroom management strategies. I did my teaching prac at Gilmore College when it was Kwinana Senior High School, and classroom management strategies was one of the greatest things I found to deal with that, and I can certainly commend them. Also in 2021, more than 3 700 department staff, including 672 graduate teachers, completed training in de-escalation and positive handling, and, when necessary, training was rescheduled in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. I will finish on this: the department suspends and excludes students to set a standard, draw a line, break a cycle, maintain good order, provide the opportunity for reflection, modify behaviour, and plan a supportive and restorative approach.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a further question.

The CHAIR: The member for Roe.

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member began by not really looking at a line item.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, chair.

The CHAIR: Just a second, parliamentary secretary. I give people the call. I am chairing. I have given the call to the member for Roe, not to you. If, when you are responding to the question, you want to raise whether or not it is relevant to the line argument, you can do that, but do not interrupt a question. The member for Roe.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, chair. This is a more specific question, parliamentary secretary. In the instance of the Gilmore College attack last week—I commend the actions of that teacher; I thought it was well handled—can the parliamentary secretary explain to me what support has been given to the teacher and students who were in the class, and also what actions happened with the particular student who launched the attack?

The CHAIR: Before the parliamentary secretary answers that, I did say before that it would be helpful to give a line item for these questions. I have allowed it to go on for a bit.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I started at page 365 and paragraph 7, or, if you are not happy with that, I can go back to page 364 and the fourth paragraph, which refers to a supportive schooling environment and strengthening the delivery of support services.

The CHAIR: It is fairly tenuous, member for Roe, but I will allow the question on this occasion.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, chair.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am not going to mention the diagnosis of the student or the circumstances to the people in this chamber. The director general has indicated that she is happy to make a briefing available to the member to talk about the unique circumstances of that particular student. In terms of the question about the support for staff, there are additional psychologists and support team support, because it was a very confronting incident, and support has been offered to all the students and staff involved. I am not going to go into the details of the student. That can be made available to the member in a private briefing.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The other part of that question was about the other students in the classroom. Are they being supported on an ongoing basis by the school psychologist? Is that how that works? What is happening for the other students who witnessed that particular incident?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Thanks, chair. I can confirm that students are offered and can access support.

Ms L. METTAM: My question relates to the same line item on page 365, “Staffing and Schools”.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I think we are on page 365 and paragraph 7.

Ms L. METTAM: Yes. Can the parliamentary secretary provide an indication of how many FTE teachers have undertaken stress leave over the past two years? Is that information available?

Mr T.J. HEALY: The question was about how many staff have accessed —

Ms L. METTAM: Stress leave over the past two years, appreciating the obvious value of retaining teachers.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Member, that is not available in the sense that it is not attached to this line item in the budget papers about attracting teachers with the right skills. A number of staff have gone through some amazing things with COVID. In answer to the member’s question, there have been a number of different challenges, but that is not available under this line item.

Ms L. METTAM: I have a further question.

The CHAIR: I want to be clear. I described the member for Roe’s linking of these questions to this part of the budget papers as being tenuous. I will let it go on, but I do not want it to go on much longer. The member for Vasse.

Ms L. METTAM: Thank you. Is the parliamentary secretary able to provide this information as supplementary information?

[9.30 am]

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member is asking about teachers who go on stress leave. A variety of different leave is available for staff. There is personal leave, sick leave and other options. They are not categorised in the same way. The information is not available according to stress leave.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to page 377 and the income statement under “Financial Statements”. Paragraph 1.4 under “Expenses” notes the increases to depreciation and leave liability. With the leave liability, what are we seeing in relation to stress leave? If the parliamentary secretary is unable to provide it now, I hope that it can be provided by way of supplementary information.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Given the fact that we have lost 10 minutes!

The CHAIR: Can I just clarify? Parliamentary secretary, I think you made a statement before that stress leave as a category was not available. Is that the answer to the question? I am just trying to work out whether there is a further question. I will let the parliamentary secretary answer.

MR T.J. HEALY: Certainly. I can give information about paragraph 1.4 on page 377 in terms of the leave liability, which I will have in just a moment. Paragraph 1.4 on page 377 refers to increases to depreciation and leave liability. I can confirm that on 16 February 2022, the Expenditure Review Committee approved new leave liability caps that will apply as at 30 June 2023 to allow agencies to focus on service delivery during the pandemic and to reflect lower levels of leave taking. The department has significantly reduced its accrued leave liability with long service leave and annual leave liability falling from \$263 million in 2014 to \$131 million in 2019. Strong efforts have been made by the department to manage the increase of liabilities. We are encouraging staff to clear their overdue balances. As the member can imagine, over the last two years, not all the staff wanted to take long service leave during term to go overseas because of COVID scenarios, but regular auditing informs communication to staff with overdue balances. The final part I have here is that the department’s leave liability cap will increase to just under \$1 145.8 million as at 30 June 2023 from the current limit of \$785.2 million.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Coming back to Gilmore College, which was the origin of the question, have any of the teachers or staff at Gilmore College taken stress leave due to that incident; and, if so, how many?

The CHAIR: I am ruling the question out of order. I have made my position clear about relevance and the link to the items in the budget, and I am not satisfied that that question is relevant to an item in the budget. The member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I refer to the table of ongoing initiatives on page 364 and “Revision to RiskCover Insurance”. I see that for this financial year, the budget shows costs of \$13.372 million.

MR T.J. HEALY: Are you looking at the bottom of the graph?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Yes, where it says, “RiskCover Insurance”—and in 2024–25 out year, there is a 54 per cent blowout to \$29.578 million. Can the parliamentary secretary explain what this change in the line item means?

MR T.J. HEALY: The department has increased its RiskCover insurance budget by \$74 million over the period from 2022–23 to 2025–26 to reflect increased workers’ compensation renewal contribution and prior period adjustments due to higher trends of severe claims over the last five years; increased hospital costs by more than the consumer price index; and an increased property contribution due to an increase in declared property values.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Can the parliamentary secretary tell me how many claims are with RiskCover at the moment and which workers are putting in these compensation claims?

MR T.J. HEALY: The number of claims lodged in the current financial year to 31 March 2022 was 1 341. This is lower than in the same time period in the previous two years, with 1 357 in 2022 and 1 453 in 2021. The Insurance Commission of Western Australia has projected claim numbers to further increase to 2 100 in 2022–23.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Based on that information, the parliamentary secretary is saying that there has been a decrease from the last two years, when there has been limited classroom activity due to COVID. That could be a reason why the department is predicting an increase—because schools are back operating. That may be the reason, but I want to know how many of these claims are for principals, how many are for teachers and how many are for education assistants.

[9.40 am]

Mr T.J. HEALY: First of all, we did not blanket close schools. A couple of schools closed based on health advice. There was a school near Fremantle, of course.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: There was limited classroom activity.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I think the member said that there are fewer workers' compensation cases because there are fewer children in schools. There are fewer children in schools because of COVID and the pandemic.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Can the parliamentary secretary please answer the question? How many of those claims are for principals? How many of those claims are for teachers? How many of those claims are for education assistants? Could he provide a breakdown of the number that he has just quoted? Also, there is a projection of a 54 per cent increase, so what he said earlier in one of his answers about dealing with antisocial behaviour is clearly not the case, because the department is projecting more issues and more teachers, principals and education assistants applying for RiskCover. The document that he quoted is clearly not working. Anyway, if he could provide that breakdown, that would be great.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that we are happy to provide by supplementary information the breakdown of RiskCover statistics for principals, teachers and education assistants. Were those the three categories the member mentioned?

The CHAIR: For what time period?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Over the last two years.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Yes. Chair, I can confirm that we will provide supplementary information on the number of applications for RiskCover for principals, education assistants and teaching staff for the last two financial years.

[Supplementary Information No B8.]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Can the parliamentary secretary please provide the projected data for the 2024–25 year, which shows a 54 per cent increase? Clearly, there is data on the number of principals, teachers and education assistants who are going to apply for RiskCover. Can he provide an estimation of those who are going to apply for RiskCover in the 2024–25 year?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I would struggle to provide the member with data for something that has not occurred yet.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: So how did the department come up with a 54 per cent increase to \$29.578 million? Surely it has some figures or modelling that it has done to come up with that figure.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Yes, there are a number of factors in RiskCover's model, but it does not have individual cases because they have not occurred yet. There are a number of models.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Is this increase of 54 per cent in RiskCover insurance to do with stress-related claims or claims of a bullying nature?

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member's question was about whether RiskCover applications are due to bullying.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Let me ask a couple of questions here. The first question is —

Mr T.J. HEALY: Just ask one and we will get to the next one.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Is the estimated increase in RiskCover insurance over the next four years mainly due to stress-related issues and matters of a bullying nature? Can the parliamentary secretary provide a breakdown of whether it is stress-related or of a bullying nature or whether it is to do with incidents such as those that the member for Roe has spoken about and that I have spoken about in Carnarvon recently, in which students took sharp implements to school and caused massive destruction to classrooms? Can he provide a breakdown of why education department employees are accessing RiskCover insurance?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that increased workers' compensation renewal contribution and prior period adjustments are due to higher trends of severe claims over the last five years and increased hospital costs by more than the CPI.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Can the parliamentary secretary please provide that data for the last five years to show the increase in RiskCover claims and the amounts that have been accessed for the issues that he has just raised?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that we can give data on the number of claims.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Can the parliamentary secretary elaborate on the claims that he raised before in response to my question about stress-related and bullying claims and other incidents? Can he provide a full list of why education staff have accessed RiskCover insurance?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that we can give data.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Over the last five years.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that we can give data on the number of claims. That can be done as a question on notice or by way of supplementary information.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Supplementary, thank you.

Mr T.J. HEALY: No worries. Did the member ask for the last five years?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Yes.

The CHAIR: I am going to need some clarification around the supplementary information. Is it the data from the last five years on the number of claims made?

Mr T.J. HEALY: It is the number of claims made to RiskCover.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: And the types of claims to RiskCover.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I do not believe we can give the type of claims, but I can confirm we can do the number of claims.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Surely the department has the types of claims, whether it be stress leave or incidents of being bullied or attacked. Surely the department has that information, because it is pretty critical information. Given the fact that there is a report on how to combat this antisocial behaviour, surely it is to do with the facts or the people accessing RiskCover.

Mr T.J. HEALY: We will add “if possible”.

The CHAIR: So “if possible”?

Mr T.J. HEALY: We will add “if possible” in there. If the department provide it, it will. But I can confirm that we can provide supplementary information that covers the last five years on the data of number of claims to RiskCover and, if possible, the type of claims.

[Supplementary Information No B9.]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: As a former teacher, I would imagine the parliamentary secretary would take a very keen interest in what happens in education. Is the parliamentary secretary concerned about these RiskCover insurance claims and their escalation by 54 per cent due to the factors that we have just spoken about? Is the parliamentary secretary concerned that education staff are now being targeted by this antisocial behaviour? It is a worrying trend. Is the parliamentary secretary concerned about it?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I was concerned when I was a teacher under the member’s government. I am not concerned now under this government.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The parliamentary secretary was concerned under the previous government. That was eight years ago.

Mr T.J. HEALY: It was five years ago.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Over the last five years, the parliamentary secretary has seen an increase in RiskCover claims, which is projected to increase by 54 per cent, but he is not concerned as a former teacher, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and Training and as a member of Parliament. Is the parliamentary secretary is not concerned by that?

Mr T.J. HEALY: The Department of Education and schools are working to support all students and staff far better than they were when I was a teacher. We have a fantastic minister in Minister Ellery, and perhaps a dodgy parliamentary secretary now in me, but we have a government that has actually responded to the stressors. I have worked in some tough schools, and there are far better supports now. I can tell the member from talking to teachers—I am sure the member has spoken to people in the community as well—that the minister’s strong action plan, which was implemented across schools by the department, has been very well received. We drew a line in the sand that was not there when I was a teacher.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I have a further question.

Mr T.J. HEALY: But again —

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Further question —

Mr T.J. HEALY: Hang on. I have not finished.

But, again, there is always more to be done. Schools reflect communities. I know that as a former teacher. The work that schools do is important. There is always more work to be done, and we are doing it.

[9.50 am]

The CHAIR: Member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The parliamentary secretary is happy that his response to this escalating antisocial behaviour problem in schools is to increase RiskCover insurances by 54 per cent. That is the response. Is the parliamentary secretary happy with that response as a way of combating the issues, because he says he has no concerns? I would

say that is pretty career limiting as a parliament secretary, and I do not think he will probably see a ministerial gig into the future, but that is enough for my questioning.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a further question.

The CHAIR: Further question. Member for Roe, is this a new question or a further question?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It is a further question on that.

I am concerned with the parliamentary secretary saying that he is more comfortable under this current government. This government was elected in 2017 when the number of attacks on principals, deputies and staff was 2 000, and now it is 2 577 in 2021. The number of weapons brought to school was 600 when this government was elected and now we are up to over 1 000 incidents of weapons being brought to school in 2021. That statement concerns me. In relation to this RiskCover insurance increase, the parliamentary secretary spoke about the CPI. Can the parliamentary secretary explain why the insurance has gone from \$13.8 million in the 2023–24 out year up to \$29.5 million in the 2024–25 out year, and then back down to \$17 million in the 2025–26 out year?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am happy to confirm a couple of things, but, again, we are diverging very much from the line item. In answer to the member's question, I can confirm that the line item itself shows a movement from the previous budget. The increase in workers' compensation is not 54 per cent; it is approximately 12 per cent from 2022–23 to 2025–26. But, again, going on the line item, I am happy to answer those queries as best as I can.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I was asking: why is it going up to \$29 million in the 2024–25 out year and then back down to \$17 million in the 2025–26 out year?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that in each year there are different fluctuations and adjustments, such as in 2024–25.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: In the parliamentary secretary's answer before, he alluded to hospital costs as part of the costs for those workers' compensation claims. Can the parliamentary secretary give us a breakdown of what those hospital costs are or —

Mr T.J. HEALY: Well—sorry; finish your question.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: What are those costs for these different categories—principals, teachers, education assistants?

Mr T.J. HEALY: No, chair. That is a RiskCover matter. We will not have access to that information.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: My understanding was that was part of the parliamentary secretary's answer before and that was part of the reasoning for the increases.

Mr T.J. HEALY: The detail that the member is after? No. Chair, I am happy to confirm that what we are discussing is the hospital costs and CPI that is part of that. We will not have access to that information for the member. We can put the question on notice for the member if he seeks that, but I am not sure the department will have access to that information.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can it not be provided as supplementary information?

Mr T.J. HEALY: No. I am happy to put it as a question on notice, but I am just foreshadowing that I am not sure the department will be able to provide that information.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Minister—sorry; parliamentary secretary, because you will not be a minister.

I refer to paragraph 4 on page 364 of budget paper No 2. The department is strengthening the delivery of its student support services through the investment in additional resources and staff training. The parliamentary secretary touched before on dealing with antisocial behaviour. The parliamentary secretary waved a document. Can the parliamentary secretary provide the number of students suspended across the education system? What support is given to those students who are suspended so that they can, I suppose, be educated on how to behave at school? Are there any support services? I will give the parliamentary secretary an example. In Carnarvon, for example, generally we deal with kids who do not behave appropriately at school by suspending them. The suspended kids then go out and roam the streets and cause other problems in the community. What programs have been put in place to work with the students and the parents to ensure that the children behave in an appropriate way at school? Can the parliamentary secretary provide a list of the number of suspensions that have occurred, perhaps, over the last five years?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am very, very happy to, chair. In 2017, the number of students suspended was 14 075. In 2018, it was 14 243; in 2019, 16 149; in 2020, 15 943; and in 2021, it was 18 068. I will also confirm and have recorded in *Hansard* that the percentage of total enrolled students suspended was 4.5 per cent in 2017, 4.5 per cent in 2018, five per cent in 2019, 4.9 per cent in 2020 and 5.5 per cent in 2021.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: There has been a steady increase of the number of students suspended. Is the parliamentary secretary able to provide a breakdown between regional Western Australian schools and metropolitan schools for suspensions over the same period?

[10.00 am]

Mr T.J. HEALY: Are there any particular regions, or is the member happy for me to read them all?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Let us go with the Gascoyne.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I will start with the member's region.

The number of students suspended in the midwest was 2 319 in 2019, 2 116 in 2020 and 2 187 in 2021. The number of students suspended in the south west was 3 976 in 2019, 3 581 in 2020 and 3 876 in 2021. The number of students suspended in the Kimberley region was 1 901 in 2019, 1 484 in 2020 and 1 889 in 2021. The number of students suspended in the goldfields was 1 703 in 2019, 1 787 in 2020 and 1 963 in 2021. The number of students suspended in the Pilbara was 1 800 in 2019, 1 504 in 2020 and 2 078 in 2021. Finally, leaving the metropolitan area out of this unless the member would like those figures also, the number of students suspended in the wheatbelt region was 2 159 in 2019, 1 807 in 2020 and 2 212 in 2021. If Hansard does not record that very well, I am happy to put the question on notice. It is certainly available.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Thank you for that, parliamentary secretary. In reference to the support services for students in paragraph 4 on page 364, can the parliamentary secretary provide a breakdown of school attendance over the last five years and a breakdown between regions? When I say regions, I mean schools within the regions, because we hear a lot about midwest–Gascoyne, but Geraldton is in that area and overshadows a lot of the stats in Carnarvon, Wiluna, Meekatharra or Mt Magnet. Can the parliamentary secretary provide the details of school attendance for each school in Western Australia over the last five years? I would be happy to take that as supplementary information.

The CHAIR: Parliamentary secretary.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Thank you very much, chair. I am happy to confirm that. Rather than just reading out all of this, because I want the opposition to get in as many questions as it can, I am happy to provide it as supplementary information. But in 2021 in the midwest, attendance was broadly at 87.7 per cent; 56.4 per cent in the remote community schools; 77.5 per cent in the district high school K–12 schools; 79.4 per cent at secondary schools; and 83.6 per cent at ed support schools and centres. There is a lot of data here, but I am happy to provide that as supplementary information to save some time.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I appreciate that, parliamentary secretary.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Not to save the member some time, but to get him some more questions.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Let me make it quite clear that it is not just the regions, because the figures for the regions are skewed. The figures for Geraldton go in with the midwest. What I want is a breakdown of the school attendance rates for every school in Western Australia.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Okay. What I am happy to do, because I have a document here —

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I am happy to take it as supplementary information.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am happy to provide as supplementary information the regional attendance figures for 2019 to 2021 for each of those regions. The document is here and I can make it available to the member very soon, but the member will have to put the question on notice in regard to which particular schools.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I have a further question.

The CHAIR: The parliamentary secretary is offering to provide the attendance rates by region for 2019 to 2021.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Why would we not go back to 2017?

The CHAIR: Sorry, I am not inviting questions. Is that the supplementary information that you want?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: No, the supplementary information that I have requested is the attendance rate for each school in Western Australia.

The CHAIR: That is not what is on offer at the moment, member for North West Central. I am not going to put it down as supplementary information unless that is something that you want to receive. You can pursue other bits of supplementary information, but that is what the parliamentary secretary is offering at the moment.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: You just asked me what I wanted. I am just telling the parliamentary secretary what I wanted.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Yes, I know. I heard it the first time. I am happy to provide the regional attendance figures for each of those areas for the regions. In terms of schools, I am not going to agree to that, but the member can put that as a question on notice in regard to the schools that he is interested in. There are 800-plus schools in the state. The member can provide a list of schools that he is interested in as a question on notice, but I will provide, and I confirm, chair, as supplementary information the 2019 to 2021 attendance.

The CHAIR: The attendance rates by region.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I will further add that Schools Online provides the attendance figures publicly. The member can google each of the schools on the department's Schools Online website and get all that information, but he can also put it as a question on notice.

The CHAIR: So, parliamentary secretary, are we providing attendance rates broken down by region for the 2019 to 2021 school years?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Correct.

[*Supplementary Information No B10.*]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Just on that, how many of those suspensions evolve into exclusions? Does the parliamentary secretary have a breakdown of exclusions?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Can the member repeat the question? Is he are asking about suspension and exclusion data?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I asked how many of those suspensions evolved into exclusions or, as a separate scenario, whether the parliamentary secretary is able to provide a breakdown, as he did on suspensions, on the number of exclusions for each area.

Mr T.J. HEALY: A suspension does not necessarily automatically mean a student is going to be excluded. In each of these cases there is a human and those things are not always necessarily connected, so we cannot really provide that.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I understand that it does not always roll into an exclusion.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I think the member is are asking how many people are suspended and how many people are excluded. I am happy to put that as a question on notice. Actually, sorry, I can give the member the number of students excluded. Is the chair happy for me to divert the question on the connection that the member is talking about?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that eight students were excluded in 2016, eight in 2017, 24 in 2018, 65 in 2019, 72 in 2020 and 76 in 2021.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I appreciate that, parliamentary secretary. When those students are excluded, does that end the involvement of the Department of Education, or is there any follow-up from there?

[10.10 am]

Mr T.J. HEALY: To answer the member's question: does it end when a student is excluded? No. Each student is case managed. There are a number of options that are available. Each student is supported back into some sort of mainstream learning. There is a variety of settings. As the member knows, we expanded the ALS settings. There are a number of different options based on their community and each individual person.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I have a further question.

The CHAIR: The member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Is the parliamentary secretary able to provide a breakdown of those suspensions for repeat offenders—those who consistently get suspended? It would be interesting to see a breakdown of the programs and assistance for those who get suspended, because if there are serial students who get suspended, clearly that is not working.

The CHAIR: Can I confirm for my own benefit, member for North West Central, that we are on paragraph 4 of page 364?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Yes, it is paragraph 4.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I do not like the term “repeat offenders”. Each student is a human. But, no, we cannot provide the data for that. What I can confirm is that a relatively small group of students with four or more suspensions—that is 3 049 students, representing 16.9 per cent of students suspended—contributed almost half, 47.9 per cent, of all suspensions in 2021.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Was that 49 per cent of suspensions are for repeat offenders?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I will repeat that again. A relatively small group of students with four or more suspensions is 3 049 students, representing 16.9 per cent of students suspended. They contributed almost half, 47.9 per cent, of all suspensions in 2021.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Did the parliamentary secretary say that the programs that the department has or does not have are working to stop those repeat offenders from being suspended from school? Clearly, with those statistics, whatever the department is doing is not working.

Mr T.J. HEALY: In answer to the member's question, we have a number of great programs and a number of great staff whom are all working very, very well and will continue to work and engage with communities. I can confirm, which is probably the member's next question, that in 2021, a total of 97 students engaged with the ALS program across four existing sites, and 32 students are continuing support in 2022. Of the 65 students that did transition, 47 students transitioned into a mainstream school, and of these, 31 returned to their enrolled school, 16 enrolled in a new school, and seven students transitioned into an alternative education setting such as TAFE. So the right fit was found for those students.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: How much money is spent on these thousands of kids who have been suspended? Does the parliamentary secretary have a figure of what is spent on rehabilitation? How much money is spent on these repeat offenders that the parliamentary secretary says make up 49 per cent of all suspensions? Does the parliamentary secretary have a figure for the amount the Department of Education spends on those who are suspended and on those who are repeat offenders?

Mr T.J. HEALY: We take all students in Western Australia. Every student is entitled to an education. I think a different approach that certainly shows high numbers is that we encourage staff to report incidents and to actively suspend and exclude when it is appropriate. We cannot break down the funding that is there. We provide a very wholesome package of goods and services for all the students, but we will work with all students, member.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The parliamentary secretary talked about all the wonderful programs that are in place. Can the parliamentary secretary provide what specific programs are in place for those students who are suspended? Furthermore, can the parliamentary secretary provide a breakdown of those repeat offenders and the programs that those repeat offenders are in? Can the parliamentary secretary provide that cost? Are there counsellors and are they involved with those students who are suspended? Are counsellors involved with the students who are repeat offenders who are suspended? The department would obviously have a breakdown of those who use which program and how much those programs cost.

Mr T.J. HEALY: We cannot give the member a breakdown of the programs. Each school has a one-line budget that it manages itself. That involves student services teams, and schools often run a student wellbeing team that has a combination of programs when students return from suspension that involve year coordinators and school chaplains, the number of which we have increased, and school psychologists, the number of which we have also increased. There is a number of different staff within those models. There is not a breakdown available, but there are very comprehensive packages available. Each school will manage as best it can, and we have given schools the resources to do that.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The government has increased those resources because of the increase in suspensions from and antisocial behaviour in schools. But anyway, do the schools or the education department have KPIs for the suspension of repeat offenders? What are the schools' KPIs? Is it to lower suspensions, is it to reduce the number of students who get suspended consistently—twice or three times? Are there any KPIs?

Mr T.J. HEALY: The KPIs that the member is after are in the budget papers, and I will leave it to him to find them. But I can confirm that we do have KPIs for those factors, and we also have very good KPIs for literacy and numeracy attainment and other things. But the member will not find them under this line item.

[10.20 am]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Are there any external providers that assist with those students who are suspended in the programs that the parliamentary secretary talked about, and what is the cost of those external providers?

Mr T.J. HEALY: There are a number of different external providers that will provide support such as chaplains or youth carers. The Clontarf Foundation and Shooting Stars Foundation are examples. But schools can really determine their own. There are a number of non-government organisations and local councils. Every school has the choice to manage their own, but there are a number.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Surely there is an education budget. Obviously, the parliamentary secretary should know how many external providers there are. What internal providers are available through the education department? Clearly, the parliamentary secretary should know what the breakdown is for regional education and metropolitan education. What resources are put into regional education and what are the resources put into the metropolitan area through external programs?

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member should put the question on notice if he would like to know the further details per school, but every single school in every single region determines its own external provider. I am very happy to read out to the member a number of service providers and programs that are available.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Can the parliamentary secretary provide it as supplementary information to save time, given the fact that he was 10 minutes late?

Mr T.J. HEALY: There are: Aurora Education Foundation, which runs the high school program and the outreach program; Glass Jar Australia; Developing Your Spark; Shooting Stars; Seven Sisters; the Koya Aboriginal Corporation's Moorditj Koorlong program and the Kaat, Koort and Horizons program; the Balancing Program; the Kaat, Koort and Horizons thriving program; the peer ambassador youth development program; SHINE Inspire Achieve Belong; the Stars Foundation; and the Stephen Michael Foundation. Service delivery costings for programs on the panel arrangement are determined by the individual service providers.

I can confirm two more things for the member: in 2020–21 to 2024–25, the state government has committed \$19.75 million specifically to support schools to purchase an engagement program for Aboriginal girls and young women. Just as an example, a school that I was at engaged a careers program named Beacon. There are a lot of programs. The director general does not send a direction saying, "All 860-plus schools should do this." The schools work out within their own one-line budget how they wish to allocate funding. But I think the member can put the question on notice and we can potentially provide some further information. Each school and each region is very different, but the programs that I have read out are an answer to the member's question.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Can the parliamentary secretary provide a breakdown between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students out of the thousands of students who either have been suspended or are suspended?

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member is going to have to find a more specific line item. But at this stage, no.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is paragraph 4 on page 364, which we have been dealing with. The parliamentary secretary has given me the figures for suspensions throughout Western Australia. Can he provide a figure for the number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students have been or are suspended?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Okay.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I am happy to take it as a supplementary.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Member, we are drawing away from a specific line item, but I do have the information here for him, which I will read out. In terms of students suspended who have Aboriginal status from 2019 to 2021, in 2019, that number was 4 157; in 2020, it was 3 866 students; and in 2021, it was 4 414 students.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: On that same line item, I would like to recognise the good work that our principals, deputies and staff do. As part of the supportive environment that is provided, can the parliamentary secretary enlighten me about what the department is doing to support our principals, deputies and staff in light of the figures that were released recently and how the number of attacks have gone from 2 000 in 2017 up to 2 577 in 2021?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I have already mentioned a couple of programs. I can go into further detail on the classroom management and behaviour management strategies. To give the member some further and new information, there are a range of supports available for principals, deputies and staff. I will begin with the Djiral-ak djinda bidi aspirant Aboriginal leaders program. That identifies action plans and leadership. In 2022, the first principal cohort of the Culturally Responsive School Leadership program will be implemented for 20 school principals. As of earlier this year, 443 principals had expressed an interest to engage with a collegiate principal. The collegiate principal program is a fantastic way to support principals from their colleagues. Since 10 February 2021, there have been 239 from regional locations and 204 from metro schools. The Leadership Institute's professional learning programs ensure that principal wellbeing is a focus within existing and new programs. I can confirm for the member that 168 aspirant principals have completed the aspirant principal preparation program. From February 2020 until May 2022, 173 newly appointed principals have completed the newly appointed principal induction, and between 2019 and 2022, 170 newly appointed principals have completed the launch program. Further, there are also online wellbeing webinars through the Leadership Institute. Collegiate principals are trained in psychological first aid to better support their principal group. There is the Thrive at Work Masterclass trial with ed support network and principal wellbeing checks, which is very, very important. There is also further engagement in the work health and safety advisory committee to appoint a new work health and safety framework.

[10.30 am]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I think we will tidy this up. I understand those leadership programs and collegiate principal programs. What I am getting to is when there has been an attack in a classroom or on a staff member or deputy or the like. Is there a program to deal with that or is it just treated on an individual basis with support from the department? How does the department deal with a teacher like the one at Gilmore College, for argument's sake, last week? What happens with that teacher? How does the Department of Education support them? Are there programs for them or is each one treated on an individual basis?

MR T.J. HEALY: Is the member's question in addition to the programs that I just mentioned?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Sorry?

MR T.J. HEALY: In addition to the programs that we have mentioned, does the member want to know what supports are available for staff?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am really talking about the teachers across the state. If there is an attack in a primary school or a senior high school, what support is given to that individual teacher?

MR T.J. HEALY: Aside from just repeating the things that I have already mentioned, every scenario—we will use Gilmore College as an example—is unique and has different circumstances. They are all managed on a case-by-case basis, depending on that staff member's needs. It is very difficult for us to predict from this chamber what that staff member is going to be facing. But I can confirm that the staff member—it is not just one staff member; a number of staff are affected by what happens within a school—has been provided support by the school and the principal. The DG has confirmed with me she has also been in contact personally with the principal to ensure that everyone there gets the support that they need.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Okay, I think we will move on to a new question, thanks.

If we can, we will just move on to page 363. I notice that there is no budget for 2022–23 and onwards for the schools ventilation strategy under “COVID-19 Response”. Can the parliamentary secretary enlighten me why? I have heard the minister and so forth talking about continuing the ventilation program within our schools. Where is the funding for the continued ventilation program, or does COVID stop at 30 June?

MR T.J. HEALY: The ventilation strategy has been implemented. We have further flexibility to respond. The pandemic is not over, but that ventilation strategy has been implemented. That is why the costs the member is talking about do not appear, but we have the flexibility to respond, just like we did previously. We have a very, very well trained and organised department that responded very rapidly.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can the parliamentary secretary confirm that every piece of ventilation equipment and the like has now been placed in all our schools, even right out through our remote communities and the like?

MR T.J. HEALY: Member, I can confirm that there is a ventilation strategy that is in place for every school.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I know the parliamentary secretary is confirming that strategy, but have all those ventilation units been delivered to all those schools right throughout Western Australia, especially in the outer regional schools of Western Australia?

MR T.J. HEALY: Member, I can confirm that each school has the equipment and the system in place for its school and its need for its season. When this was put in place, obviously it was summer. We are now going into winter. Every school and every region is very, very different. I will confirm that we purchased a number of purifiers and a number of pieces of equipment. They were provided to the schools when each school did its assessment. Each school had its own unique assessment for each classroom. That relied on looking at and assessing the natural ventilation, mechanical ventilation and air purification. We have the capacity to relocate. Every region is very different. What is summer in one school is a very, very different winter in another school. We have the ability to adjust based on those needs, but each school has what it needs available to it for its own ventilation strategy.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the parliamentary secretary confirm that every public school has an air purifier for every classroom, and did they have an air purifier for every classroom at the beginning of term 1?

MR T.J. HEALY: To assist the member, we purchased a number of air purifiers, but each school and each principal have worked out their own needs for their school and their classrooms. The natural ventilation is the first assessment. Natural ventilation is achieved through fresh air and maximising that fresh air in a room. That is not always available in a regional school in the middle of summer. There is also mechanical ventilation that uses evaporative coolers, air conditioners, fans and other things to adequately ventilate rooms. The schools that do not have those options available as per their individual ventilation strategy have been provided with the purifiers. Every classroom has been assessed and provided with what they needed.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the parliamentary secretary provide us with a breakdown of the schools that have not been provided with air purifiers as part of the so-called ventilation strategy?

MR T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that we surveyed each classroom and each mechanical device, and on the basis of the health advice that was determined by the CHO, we determined the needs for each classroom's air circulation.

[10.40 am]

Ms L. METTAM: How was this assessment undertaken? The parliamentary secretary referred to the Chief Health Officer. Were the principals tasked with making an assessment themselves? I note that the parliamentary secretary stated that having fans in classrooms or having a classroom in a regional location may suffice. Can the parliamentary

secretary give me a clearer indication of how it was assessed whether there was a need for a carbon dioxide monitor, ventilation or an air purifier for these classrooms?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It was just a window in regional WA.

Ms L. METTAM: Yes; just a door open.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Yes; the fan on.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that the strategy was based on current national and international guidelines and endorsed by the WA Chief Health Officer. To inform the strategy, the department implemented a comprehensive assessment program of windows and mechanical ventilation systems in public educational facilities across the state. Schools were issued with guidance on ventilation protocols from term 1, 2022, and the assessments also informed decisions about whether air purifiers fitted with HEPA filters—high-efficiency particulate absorbing filters—were required to be provided to specific learning areas where adequate ventilation was not able to be supplied by natural or mechanical means. I am sure the member has seen the poster about the ventilation strategy. Very good information was provided to schools, students, families and educators.

Ms L. METTAM: Was it up to principals to make their own assessment against the international guidelines—those posters—for the determination of whether a HEPA filter was required in each individual classroom? How was it determined?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that the Chief Health Officer gave advice about the assessments and that contractors did the assessments.

Ms L. METTAM: Were contractors employed to do the assessments for each classroom across the state? What qualifications did these contractors have to enable them to make that determination?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that window assessments were conducted by one stream of contractors and mechanical assessments by another, in line with the natural ventilation and mechanical ventilation strategies.

Ms L. METTAM: Are we able to get by way of supplementary information the classrooms or the schools that have the HEPA filters?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that the department purchased approximately 12 000 of these devices. They have been deployed out to schools. If the member would like a list of schools, by region or by school, she can ask a question on notice and we can provide that.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the parliamentary secretary provide that by way of supplementary information? For the purposes of transparency, we would also like to see the reports that were undertaken of each of these schools. I am sure parents would be very interested to know the status of their school and why their school may not have been successful in receiving these air purifiers or HEPA filters for their classrooms.

Mr T.J. HEALY: So that the member does not ask three more questions on this, I am happy to provide information on the regional locations to which the ventilators, filters or machines have gone.

Ms L. METTAM: Okay.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I might have to clarify. Is the member happy with a list of regions or does she want me to provide a list of schools? We will provide a list of schools. I am sure that will detail the regions as well. I am happy to provide by supplementary information the list of schools that received the filters.

The CHAIR: In regional areas or across the whole state?

Ms L. METTAM: Across the state.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Are there any particular regions?

Ms L. METTAM: No, across the state.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Happy to provide that.

The CHAIR: The parliamentary secretary is going to provide a list of schools across the state that have received HEPA filters.

[*Supplementary Information No B11.*]

Ms L. METTAM: Is the parliamentary secretary able to confirm whether there are HEPA filters at “Silver City”?

The CHAIR: I think one of the issues that you might have with this question, member for Vasse, is that the line item you are referring to is the schools ventilation strategy. Is that right?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes.

The CHAIR: I am not satisfied that the question is relevant to that line item.

Ms L. METTAM: Okay.

The CHAIR: Any further questions?

Ms L. METTAM: Well, I was just wondering whether the Department of Education was —

The CHAIR: I have ruled it out of order on the basis that it is not relevant to the schools ventilation strategy.

Ms L. METTAM: Okay. I have a further question.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Has the Minister for Education and Training's office been done?

The CHAIR: Member for North West Central, I am not inviting interjections from you. I know you think you are the smartest of the three on that side, but the member for Vasse has got the questions at the moment. The member for Vasse has the call.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Just between you and me!

The CHAIR: No, I call you to order.

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member for Roe is pretty smart.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: You cannot attack me and then call me to order.

The CHAIR: I call you to order for that, member for North West Central. You are just interrupting your own member who is asking questions. The member for Vasse has the call.

Mr T.J. HEALY: And just for the record, chair, I do find all three of them very smart.

The CHAIR: No, I am not asking for interjections from you.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I tried.

Ms L. METTAM: I am interested in how it was determined that HEPA filters were selected, in terms of the product itself. What is the make and model of these HEPA filters? I am sure that is publicly available. What evidence is there that these HEPA filters have been effective, or is there any evidence that they have been effective as part of the ventilation strategy rollout? Is the fact that there is no further funding an indication that this program has been unsuccessful?

[10.50 am]

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that the brand was Samsung. A market scan was completed and an assessment made of a number of factors. For the member's information, they included ease of use in a school setting and capability to deliver.

Ms L. METTAM: Which schools received HEPA filters that are currently gathering dust—that are not being commissioned? We have heard reports that some schools received HEPA filters but have not used them. Is the parliamentary secretary aware of this; and, if so, which schools, and to what extent has this been an issue?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that we purchased a number of devices. They were given to the schools that required them as part of their strategy. Do we have some additional stock? To respond to that, I am going to pass to the deputy director general in a second because he has some really good extra information to provide the member. They will be going to the right schools. We are also doing an assessment now, I understand, but the deputy DG will probably expand further on that. What we applied as part of our strategy in summer is very, very different from what we will provide in winter. Regional schools and metro schools have very different needs, as does each region, in summer and winter. I will pass to the deputy DG, Mr Peckitt.

Mr J. Peckitt: A number of allocations of air purifiers have been made to schools. There was an initial allocation in term 1 for the ventilation strategy based on summer conditions at the time. Since then, we have allocated additional air purifiers. We have recently done a contingency allocation. They are basically there for schools to use when they need them. It is possible that some of those are not being used at this point because they might be used for a particular event, such as an exam or something else that might occur at the school. At the moment, we are allocating those for winter conditions. Schools may not need them until the weather cools and then they will put them in place. That is the likely reason that they are not all necessarily being used right at this moment.

Ms L. METTAM: I understand some issues have been raised about the quality of the purifiers or the HEPA filters that were purchased. How will we know that our students have benefited from this taxpayer-funded investment in schools? I also understand that other schools may have missed out. What assessment has been undertaken to illustrate the efficacy of this ventilation program, which has now ceased?

Mr T.J. HEALY: There were a couple of things there. How do we work out the quality of these items? Some people talk about the quality of the members of Parliament in this chamber, too; that is always tricky. We have a very well-planned ventilation strategy for schools that assesses a number of factors. We are also not relying on one single thing. I will pass to the director general in a moment to further expand on that, but our COVID-19 pandemic response is not just about ventilators in schools. There are a number of well-planned and well-organised initiatives, such as the vaccination of staff and mask wearing—a number of things. I will let the director general expand further on those points.

Ms L. Rodgers: I think it is best to see it in its totality. Throughout the whole COVID pandemic, we have worked really closely with the Chief Health Officer, and the Chief Health Officer obviously has been working with his colleagues in the AHPPC. Throughout the last two years, we have always taken the Chief Health Officer's advice. In regard to keeping our schools safe, there has been a range of measures that we have put in place to make sure that we have been able to maintain the continuity of teaching and learning, and keep our schools open. Some of the things that have been put in place have been, obviously, mask wearing—we have seen that at some point—the vaccination strategy, and there has been enhanced cleaning in schools since very early on. Of course, one of the other recommendations that the Chief Health Officer made was around ventilation. There was no one component of this strategy that stood on its own. The most important thing for us in regard to ventilation is just that. It is not about whether they are opening the door or whether they have an evaporative cooler or a fan—the key aspect is to keep air circulated. We needed to assess every single classroom—to look at each classroom and say, “How best can we get the optimum conditions to ensure that air is circulated through these classrooms?” Along with additional cleaning, along with the vaccination strategy, along with a whole range of other measures, we have made sure that classrooms have airflow. It is really hard to be able to understand the efficacy of one particular part of that strategy. Over the last two years, we have been able to keep schools open and we have been able to keep kids learning. We have done a number of things and we will continue to take the advice of the Chief Health Officer as and when he provides that advice.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I would like to add that a key part of that was our border arrangements. That was a key part of how things were managed. Obviously, that involved going against the advice of the Liberal Party and the advice of the patron saint of the Liberal Party, Clive Palmer, on the border arrangements.

Ms L. METTAM: What a ridiculous comment.

The CHAIR: The member for Vasse.

Ms L. METTAM: I note that the ventilation strategy is not being funded further while the communications strategy for COVID continues. How do we know the HEPA filters are working? Do they meet international standards? Why were they selected above UV filters, for example?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Just to partly repeat, we have delivered on our strategy. It has been implemented. But with the funding changes in the budget papers, we can pivot as required. As we have said, the department is doing a winter assessment now of schools. I am aware that those on the other side do not always appreciate the different regions within Western Australia and the different needs of those regions, but each area is very, very different and they will have an effective strategy. We plan to meet that. We have the ability to pivot to it. A key thing is that we will follow the expert advice of the Chief Health Officer. I know that is something that has not been supported by the other side before, but if the Chief Health Officer gives us further advice in that area, we will follow it. I mean, the pandemic is not over. We still have a number of cases. A number of schools are still dealing with this. It is far from over, but we have the ability and the flexibility, and a great team of people, to implement the strategy.

Ms L. METTAM: The parliamentary secretary did not answer the question. I am simply asking how the HEPA filters were selected. Do they meet an international standard? Do we know they are effective? Why were they selected above what is used in other schools overseas, such as UV filters?

[11.00 am]

[Ms A.E. Kent took the chair.]

Mr T.J. HEALY: To repeat, an assessment was made following a market scan. They were selected on their capability to deliver and ease of use in school settings.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I move to the line above on page 363, “Schools Administrative Support”. This is in relation to COVID. Can the parliamentary secretary define what that is and how it has progressed over the COVID period?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Small to medium-sized Western Australian schools have been provided with additional funding to support the administrative requirements associated with managing active COVID-19 cases in their schools, including the requirement to manage their own contact tracing. As at 23 March 2022, a total of \$3.025 million had been allocated to public schools. Funding of just under \$1.28 million has been provided to non-government schools

through grant agreements with the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia and Catholic Education Western Australia.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I want to ask about staff, so I can do it either on this line or when we move to FTE.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Let us move there.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: How are we progressing in relation to relief staff given the recent uptick, I guess, in COVID cases? What are the shortfalls in the system? Do we have schools that are short of teaching staff at the moment?

Mr T.J. HEALY: We acknowledge that there is pressure in schools. It has not been an easy time for the last two years, but schools have stepped up—parents, schools, educators, students, everything. I think even the member has acknowledged in his speeches the fact that Western Australia has had more face-to-face teaching than anywhere else in Australia or the world as a result of the incredible job of the government in working in partnership with the community and schools. But this term, like last term, there is definitely pressure in schools in terms of relief. Staff and family members—close contacts or those who have COVID—are isolating, as they have been directed to, and that is resulting in staff numbers being down, so we acknowledge there is staffing pressure in schools. We use relief pools, principally. If schools can no longer go through their relief pools, they can opt to reach out to the department and we can deploy available staff from the department who are trained teachers.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: How many staff are out of the system at the moment on different types of leave waiting for the working mandate to cease?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I think the member has two questions. We can provide the number of staff deployed centrally from the department who have gone out to schools. I think the member was also asking another question about the number of staff who do not meet the vaccine requirements and who are currently not in schools. Does the member want to ask the question about deployment of staff again in a second, and I can confirm those staff who did not comply or meet the requirements of the vaccination plan?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes.

Mr T.J. HEALY: The Department of Education has more than 50 000 staff. Fewer than one per cent of staff did not initially comply with the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I understand from recent reports that there are 13 staff who are not vaccinated but who are in the system because, apparently, they have had COVID. Why were they allowed back into the system?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that 13 staff are in the category that the member alluded to, without saying the correct term. As the member knows, the majority of Western Australians got vaccinated. The one per cent of staff, or less than one per cent of staff, I have already mentioned, did not start teaching at the start of the year because they did not meet the vaccination requirements. There are currently 13 staff who, as a result of declaring that they have had COVID, are currently back working. But when that period ends, if they continue to not meet the vaccination requirements, they will revert to their status.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Has there been any backlash from other staff within the system over those 13 who have been allowed back in without having been vaccinated?

Mr T.J. HEALY: No.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to page 364 and the line item “National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) Online”. It is in the table.

Mr T.J. HEALY: About three-quarters of the way down?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes, three-quarters down. There have been recent reports that there has been a delay to NAPLAN testing and that it has been stretched out over a longer period due to COVID arrangements or COVID numbers. Can the parliamentary secretary confirm that?

[11.10 am]

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that we extended that NAPLAN period by a week.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: How many of the NAPLAN tests were done online? Is there a breakdown? Were any done in the home environment, and what is the breakdown for that?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I was about to say that I do not think we are going to have this data because it was only last week, but we have an amazing team and director general in the Department of Education. I can confirm that 88.7 per cent of NAPLAN online testing has been completed, and we expect the rest of the testing to be done by the end of the period.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is the department concerned about the integrity of the results due to the delays et cetera?

Mr T.J. HEALY: No.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Given the nature of online activity, not only for NAPLAN but also online learning, we have heard of Australian school students being at risk of unprecedented tracking and surveillance from various remote learning corporations. Has the education department taken any steps to minimise the potential tracking and surveillance of our children?

Mr T.J. HEALY: In a NAPLAN context?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: In a NAPLAN context or an online learning context. As the parliamentary secretary knows, online learning is potentially increasing in these times.

Mr T.J. HEALY: In the context of the nation and the world, Western Australia did not move as online as the rest of the world because we did not have the lockdown days and a lot of learning remained at school. However, on the point I think the member is making, the Department of Education has established a centrally managed site and security model encompassing security, risk management and governance processes in both operational and strategic contexts to cover schools, central services and regional offices. There are multiple layers of security technologies to address known security threat factors, and external security operation centres monitor, alert and help defend against such threats. Cybersecurity issues are aptly reported via a well-defined series of processes that include notifying appropriate senior staff, and threat metrics and activity reports from the security operation centre are provided monthly with live data available via a portal. I can confirm that a cybersecurity manager role was created, advertised and filled in 2021 to ensure a dedicated resource for leading and enhancing the department's cybersecurity posture.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is the parliamentary secretary comfortable that the integrity of our children's private information is intact, given the cybersecurity program at the Department of Education?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I think we are responding appropriately. This is an area that is changing very, very rapidly, and we are responding appropriately. That is the key thing. That will evolve based on different scenarios and threats, apps, and things like that. I can confirm that each school has a firewall in place and each app that is used is assessed for privacy and security. Each app that is available or recommended by a school is assessed. The department also continues to work very closely with the eSafety Commissioner.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Does the education department use, for instance, the Adobe Connect app for videoconferencing and screen sharing, which would have access to students' cameras and microphones and also allow it to collect phone numbers?

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member will have to put the specific question about Adobe Connect and others on notice so that the department can provide the information that it can. In further answer to the member's question, we heavily promote cyber-safety education to young people, educators and families. That is an ongoing conversation, as I have already. But in proper answer to the member's question, the department principally uses Teams and Webex; that is the real answer to the question. That is the primary one that we would use, which has, as the member knows, better levels of security.

The CHAIR: Member for Roe and parliamentary secretary, do you want to just break for five minutes or are you happy to continue?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am happy to continue because we started 10 minutes late, so we have lost 10 minutes of our time.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am fine.

The CHAIR: Okay.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you. On page 376, the bottom item is "Asbestos Containing Materials Removal and/or Replacement". There is an allocation of \$1.73 million for one year only. Does this mean all asbestos has been removed from the public school system, because there does not seem to be anything further in the out years?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that the use of asbestos in building materials was phased out in the late 1980s, but it is likely that it continued to be used until stocks were exhausted in the early 1990s. Of the estimated 600 public schools built before 1993, infrastructure at these sites may include asbestos-containing materials. All public schools have a site-specific asbestos-containing materials register, which I know the member is aware of because we have spoken about it in the chamber. That is an integral part of the Department of Education's asbestos management plan. I can confirm that in 2020–21, the asbestos-containing-material removal program focused on removing ACM sunroofs and, where possible, removing and replacing service pits, fire doors, soffit linings, and external eaves. Metal strip ceilings were replaced in three schools and contaminated roof spaces at a variety of schools. The ACM removal program for 2020–21 has been completed and the program for 2021–22 is in progress.

[11.20 am]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: How many metropolitan schools are currently on the asbestos register?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I will just clarify: how many schools are currently on the register?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes. How many schools are on the register, as a combination of metro and regional?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am very sure this was a question on notice from the opposition, from memory, but I will give details of the central school register that is available. Is the member looking for an update? Am I wrong or has the member asked questions on this before?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes. I am asking how many schools are on the register?

Mr T.J. HEALY: In further answer to the question, 600 public schools are currently on the register as having had asbestos at some point.

Mr T.J. HEALY: To further assist, I am pretty sure that the member asked a question on notice on this in the past. We could possibly update the answer to that if he wants to resend it. From memory, I recall seeing a question on notice on that. If I am wrong, I apologise.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes. I have a further question. Where is the risk register kept for each individual school? Is there a register kept at the school?

Mr T.J. HEALY: First of all, it is a central school register, and it is kept at the school. But I can also add that online asbestos awareness training is now mandatory for all school principals, deputy principals, managers of corporate services, head cleaners, senior gardeners, and gardeners who work alone. The department continues to monitor the mandatory ACM training compliance and has developed an automated process requiring school principals and site managers to confirm every semester that they are meeting the key requirements of the asbestos management plan.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Each school keeps a register at the school, which is updated after various works are completed. Is that the scenario?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Yes; I can confirm that it is updated as required.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: At each school? Yes.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Actually, I might add further to that. ACM registers are updated through formal audits that occur at intervals as recommended by an independent assessor, but not exceeding three years, and on an as-required basis to reflect details of any significant ACM removal.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can the parliamentary secretary confirm that East Fremantle Primary School is one of the schools that is on the central asbestos register?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have been alerted to concerns raised by parents about irregularities with the risk register and the amount of friable asbestos on the site. Does the parliamentary secretary have any comments on the risk register at East Fremantle Primary School?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am happy to confirm that a WorkSafe inspector from the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety undertook a site visit of the school in January 2022 and confirmed that all the works were being undertaken in accordance with the regulatory requirements. In March this year, the member for Roe requested a copy of the asbestos reports and registers held by the department for that school, which were provided to him. Is that correct?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is correct.

Mr T.J. HEALY: My understanding is that East Fremantle Primary School has followed the requirements within the department's asbestos management plan on consultation and communication with the school community each time asbestos works have occurred.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Was unsealed friable asbestos dust and debris disclosed to the school insurer?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I cannot confirm what was disclosed to RiskCover.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: As I said, I have had parental concerns raised with me about contamination at the school and also about the risk ratings with the risk matrix of the asbestos register. Would the department be comfortable if an independent assessment were undertaken of the situation at East Fremantle Primary School?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that WorkSafe, this year, has inspected the site. It is separate. It is independent from the department.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: At this stage I will leave it at that, but I want to express concerns with some of the inconsistencies, I would say, in relation to the risk register, the asbestos register, the risk matrix, and concerns also in relation to communication to some of the parents in the school community. This was also pointed out as a school of concern by the education minister in 2015 when she was the opposition education spokesperson. I will leave it at that for the moment, thank you.

The CHAIR: Are there any further questions to this division?

[11.30 am]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: My next question is in relation to page 374, and Hedland Senior High School, which is about 90 per cent of the way down. Can the parliamentary secretary update me on how renovations have been going at the Hedland Senior High School? They have been dragging on for several years now.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I thank the member very much for the question. The member is correct that through the very, very hard work of the local member, the state government has allocated \$15 million to upgrade Hedland Senior High School. In May 2021, Pindan Contracting went into administration and all work ceased at the school. Following the collapse of Pindan Contracting, the budget increased from \$15 million to \$18.5 million in the 2021–22 budget process to fund the completion of the works. The process of ADCO Constructions taking over the work from Pindan took more time than originally anticipated due to additional works being required, and the state via the Department of Finance and ADCO subsequently reached agreement on a revised completion date. We are aiming for late October 2022, which is on schedule at this time, noting that there are obviously supply chain delays and we are still in the middle of the pandemic.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you. I will leave it at that, other than to say that a lot of the wealth of the nation comes from that area and we look forward to that school being completed sooner than later.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Hear, hear, huzza.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Just going to page 379, and the details of controlled grants and subsidies, I refer to the line item “National School Chaplaincy Program”, which ceases to be funded as of next year. In last year’s budget papers, the program was funded with an increase over the forward estimates. Why has this program ceased, even though in the narrative below the table, the commonwealth has committed to the funding over the forward estimates but the state allocation has not been determined?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I can confirm that the current national school chaplaincy program project agreement received commonwealth funding for public and non-government schools and for administrative costs to operate the school chaplaincy program. The commonwealth government has committed to the continuation of funding until 2025–26; however, the state allocation has not yet been determined. As I am sure the member is aware, we expect the commonwealth government to be of great assistance in that area, given that there was quite a large change on the weekend—I am not sure if you heard about it!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I did.

Mr T.J. HEALY: But there will be a change in federal government, and I think we will definitely see very strong support for Western Australia continuing.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is the parliamentary secretary confident that the state government will commit to this program in conjunction with the commonwealth, even though it has not really been outlined in the forward estimates?

Mr T.J. HEALY: The line that the member is talking about is the federal side. The state government’s commitment to school chaplaincy is very clear, as presented in the budget papers and at the state election. We expect the federal government to continue with its role in chaplaincy, yes. It is a great program.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I understand that.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I refer to page 378 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, and the income statement and income from government, “Royalties for Regions Fund”. I assume the funding for the Department of Education is coming from royalties for regions as outlined in budget paper No 3 under the line item “Put Education Assistants Back in the Classroom”. I assume that is an election commitment?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Yes, I can confirm that was from 2017.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: In the income statement on page 378, the royalties for regions fund is \$9.1 million across the forward estimates

Mr T.J. HEALY: Yes, I have got that. So, the regional community services fund?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Yes, that is right. I am assuming that the funding that is allocated there is from royalties for regions and is identified in the budget under “Put Education Assistants Back in the Classroom. That is where the RFR component appears. I can point to budget paper No 3.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Yes, that is correct.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: So, it is \$9.1 million across the forward estimates for putting education assistants back in the classroom. Can I confirm that that is not the total amount for that program, just the regional component?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Yes, that is correct.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Could the parliamentary secretary tell me the cost of the entire program?

Mr T.J. HEALY: In 2020–21, the total cost will be \$19.56 million.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Is that the same across the forward estimates?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Roughly, yes.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Thank you. I have a new question on the same thing—royalties for regions expenditure in budget paper No 3, which I assume is reflected through this regional community services fund line item in budget paper 2, volume 1, on page 378. I refer to budget paper No 3 and the allocation for the Western Australian College of Agriculture in the Kimberley. What role has the department had in developing that? There is literally \$1 million allocated in this year's financial year. What is the role of the department in terms of that \$1 million?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I acknowledge the very hard work of the member for Kimberley, of course. In answer to the member's question, this proposal is to explore the feasibility, through a business case, of establishing a Western Australian College of Agriculture in the Kimberley to ensure that students in the region, particularly Aboriginal students, have the same opportunities to engage in agricultural education as other students in the metropolitan area and other regional locations.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is for the preparation of a business case, is it, member?

Mr T.J. HEALY: That is correct.

[11.40 am]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: When does the parliamentary secretary expect that business case will be completed?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Member, we expect that to be completed in the next financial year.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: The Kimberley is a big place. The member for Kimberley is here. Is there an indication of where that might be located? Has any work been done in terms of where the department would like to see this college located? I would be very supportive of it; there is no criticism. I think it is a wonderful idea to expand our agricultural college network, which is one of the best in the nation.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Royalties for regions is a very important program. For many years, as the member probably knows, business cases were not developed and a lot of assessments were made as to needs and requirements. That is what the business case is going to assess. In terms of location, we will do the work first to work out that evidence-based location. It is different from past practices for royalties for regions.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am not accepting your partisan comments on something that you were not around to assess.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Apologies if I made it partisan.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am interested in finding out where we can expect to see the agricultural college go. The Kimberley is a big place. Are we talking about Kununurra? Are we talking about Broome? Is it likely to be a multi-campus arrangement? How is the department going to go about that consultation process?

Mr T.J. HEALY: As I stated before, it is too soon to say, and we will be developing a business case, in the next financial year we expect, to assess the best locations.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Okay.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am happy to hear the member's thoughts, but we will also rely on the evidence in the business case.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to the top of page 373, and "Transportable classrooms." How many transportable classrooms will \$20 million buy?

The CHAIR: While you are preparing that, parliamentary secretary, I am mindful of the time and we have two other divisions.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: This will be my last question.

Mr T.J. HEALY: For the expediency of time, there will be 86.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Where will they be housed and stored?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Member, the cost for this will be for constructing. They will need to be constructed first before they are stored somewhere, and they will be deployed to the areas of need.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Has the parliamentary secretary got any indication of what parts of the state they will be sent to?

Mr T.J. HEALY: Generally, they will be going to high-growth areas.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 25 May 2022]

p200c-220a

Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Peter Rundle; Ms Libby Mettam; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Ms Mia Davies

The CHAIR: Any further questions for this division? No? Okay.

The appropriation was recommended.